

# **Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Gov. Beshear awards first Work Ready Communities certification to three Kentucky counties**

**Press Release Date:** Thursday, February 16, 2012

**Contact Information:**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** – Governor Steve Beshear announced today that Daviess, Warren and Woodford counties have been certified as Kentucky’s first-ever Work Ready Communities, and Russell County has achieved Work Ready Community in Progress status.

The new certification program from the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet assures employers that a local workforce has the talent and skills necessary to staff existing jobs and to master the innovative technologies new jobs will require.

“Congratulations to these counties for becoming the first Work Ready Communities in Kentucky,” said Gov. Beshear. “This designation shows employers that these counties have completed rigorous requirements and are a cut above other communities nationally when it comes to a skilled labor force. I encourage all Kentucky communities to strive for the Work Ready Community designation.”

Kentucky is the third state to begin certifying counties as Work Ready Communities based on the quality of their labor force. To become certified, communities must gather local support and commitment and apply for the Work Ready Community designation. Counties have to meet criteria in six areas including high school graduation rate, National Career Readiness Certificate holders, demonstrated community commitment, educational attainment, soft-skills development and digital literacy.

“Daviess, Warren and Woodford counties are role models for other communities that want to demonstrate a commitment to reaching education, workforce and economic development goals that make their communities a desirable place for businesses,” said Joseph U. Meyer, secretary of the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet.

“We are excited to designate Daviess, Warren and Woodford counties as Work Ready Communities and Russell County as Work Ready in Progress. We look forward to certifying many others at both levels in the future. This designation gives communities an economic advantage when companies are looking for a place to locate and it shows established Kentucky businesses that they will continue to have a strong pipeline of skilled

workers in the future,” said Crystal Gibson, chair of the Kentucky Work Ready Communities Review Panel and vice president of Communications and Public Affairs at Citigroup.

Russell County was designated as a Work Ready Community in Progress because it is close to meeting the criteria to be certified. To achieve this level, a county must present a viable plan to meet all of the criteria within three years. The designation shows that a community is making strides and working with its business, education, workforce and economic development leaders to set and meet common goals that will give the county an economic edge.

Applications for the certification were reviewed by a panel appointed by the KWIB. The panel recommended certification by the board for the counties that met the criteria. The panel will meet three times a year to review applications, which can be submitted at any time.

For more information about the Work Ready Communities program, go to <http://kwib.ky.gov/workreadycommunity.htm>.

###